

**Favour to MNCs by the Railways**

328. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item "Railways Scheme favours MNC" appearing in the 'Times of India' Kolkata dated 19th January, 2001; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) to proliferate retail railway ticketing through the use of Service Providers and terminal operators so that there is a saving in the cost for the railways and improvement in customer interface process, Indian Railways has entered into an MoU with Indian Railway catering & Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) to facilitate railway ticketing. IRCTC in turn will appoint Service Providers to give them IT support in the form of hardware, software and the technology and finance. The terminal operators may also be appointed in India and abroad to facilitate ticketing. As the volume of traffic on Indian Railways is quite large, it has been decided to invite offers only from those parties who have wide experience in this field and are technically and financially very sound. Incidentally, most of the companies short-listed are Indian Companies or Consortium of Indian companies with other partners.

**Funds Crunches in Railways**

329. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways are feeling funds crunch in implementing the recommendations of Railways Safety Review Committee; and